

**MINUTES OF THE
PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE MEETING
MARCH 12, 2002**

The Proficiency Testing Committee of the National Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Conference (NELAC) met by teleconference on Tuesday, March 12, 2002, at 1:00 p.m., Eastern Standard Time (EST). The meeting was led by Chairperson Ms. Barbara Burmeister of the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene. The Agenda is given in Attachment A. A list of Action Items is given in Attachment B and the List of Participants is given in Attachment C. *The purpose of the meeting was to address items of importance identified in the meeting agenda.*

INTRODUCTION

The teleconference commenced with Ms. Burmeister taking roll call and reviewing the Agenda.

MINUTES AND ACTION ITEM REVIEW

Minutes from the February 26, 2002 teleconference were reviewed and accepted as written. The action items were reviewed and status shown on Attachment B.

TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

PT Reporting Limits Subcommittee Report

Finalize Field of Testing Tables – Ms. Marykay Steinman reviewed the changes she made to the Field of Testing Tables document. The major change was the PTRL footnote added to each table which states:

“NELAC Proficiency Testing Reporting Limits (PTRLs) are provided as guidance to laboratories analyzing NELAC PT samples. At a minimum, the laboratory should use a method that is sensitive enough to generate quantitative results at the PTRLs shown. NELAC PTRLs are also provided as guidance to PT Providers. At a minimum for all analytes with an assigned value equal to “0”, the PT Provider should verify that the sample does not contain the analyte at a concentration greater than or equal to the PTRL.”

The revised tables will be sent to Ms. Jeanne Hankins for posting on the NELAC website.

Radiochemistry Field of Testing (FOT) Subcommittee Report

Dr. John Griggs reported that the Radiochemistry FOT subcommittee held their first teleconference on March 8, 2002. Participation was excellent with all 13 members in attendance. There were individuals participating from the Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Energy, Department of Defense, state participants from Illinois and Massachusetts, Environmental Resource Associates and Analytics Incorporated. The attendees were briefed about the history of Appendix G. New language is being drafted for Appendix G-3 by the subcommittee and will be forwarded for review and approval by the Proficiency Testing Committee. Dr. Griggs reported that there have been requests from various individuals, groups, and agencies to look at matrices in addition to water. Draft criteria for the matrices will be written for discussion at the next subcommittee teleconference. Drinking water will be used as the starting point, however, it will not be limited to just water. The subcommittee is revising the draft to be reviewed by the Proficiency Testing Committee for agreement prior to submitting it to Ms. Jeanne Hankins by the May 01, 2002 deadline for NELAC 8.

Acceptance Criteria Re-evaluation Update

Status of PT Study Data Received – Ms. Burmeister reported that she received data from six proficiency testing providers by the cutoff date of March 08, 2002. She is in the process of masking the data and putting the data into a single format.

Master Plan for Evaluation of Data – The data will then be forwarded to Mr. Thomas Coyner for calculating the data. Mr. Coyner, Mr. Chuck Wibby, Mr. Matthew Caruso, Dr. Ralph Obenauf, Mr. Jeffrey Lowry from Environmental Resource Associates, an EPA representative and hopefully a statistician will be members of a subcommittee to determine the next steps after review of the data results. The subcommittee will meet before the end of March 2002 by teleconference.

Subcommittee Report – It was suggested that a Proficiency Testing Committee member lead this subcommittee. Ms. RaeAnn Haynes agreed to take the lead and to provide the Proficiency Testing Committee with the subcommittee status every two weeks.

Status of Revised “Six Month” FAQ

Ms. Haynes reported that the NELAP Accrediting Authorities group reviewed the draft FAQ. They interpreted the “six month” language to mean not more than seven months. There was also discussion about the difference between timeframes referred to as “regularly scheduled” and “corrective action.” It was determined that the Standard does not differentiate between the two. The Proficiency Testing Committee determined that additional language should be added to the Standards clarifying this issue. Ms. Burmeister requested Dr. Anand Mudambi to take this issue to his subcommittee for discussion. The FAQ document must be changed to reflect the “no more than seven months” requirement. Ms. Haynes will revise the document and distribute to the Proficiency Testing Committee.

The issue was raised about the Accrediting Authorities not receiving complete reports from the PT providers. The Proficiency Testing Committee believes that if a proficiency test is run for NELAP purposes, then the appropriate accrediting authority should receive the complete report. Ms. Burmeister recommended that this topic be discussed at NELAC 8 because there will be representatives from the laboratories and the proficiency testing providers in attendance.

Appendix D Ongoing Monitoring Criteria Subcommittee Report

Ms. Burmeister reported that a subcommittee was formed to work on this issue. The committee requested the subcommittee to address the issue of ongoing oversight criteria for the PT providers. The proposal should provide an adequate level of oversight without going overboard. Dr. Obenhaus is the lead, and the other members are Mr. Coyner, Dr. Michael Miller, Mr. Carter, Mr. Caruso, and Mr. Wibby. It was noted that there should be members from one or two states, and Ms. Burmeister requested suggestions be sent to Dr. Obenhaus. This subcommittee will meet prior to March 26, 2002 and report at the next PT teleconference.

Quick Response Proficiency Testing Subcommittee Report

Dr. Mudambi stated that this subcommittee will review all the comments received at a teleconference scheduled for the week of March 18th. He will then email the Proficiency Testing Committee the list of issues and identified relevant Standards and proposed language changes. Dr. Mudambi will update this Committee at the next scheduled teleconference.

Preparation Methods – What Comes Next?

Dr. Larry Jackson reported that the requested data by method expected December 2002 has not been received. He will again attempt to get this information to compare to the current acceptance criteria data for differences.

Comments/Questions Received

Deb Nadeau, Katahdin Analytical Services – A comment regarding the expansion of the New York State Proficiency Testing Program has been received by the committee. In discussion, it was noted that laboratories need to pick PT samples from providers who best match their scope of accreditation. The expansion of a PT program is a business decision. This committee is a standard setting body and cannot force PT providers to offer additional PT samples.

David Wildasin, American Westech, Inc. – This comment is in regard to soil proficiency testing concentration ranges for VOCs. The methanol extraction that this lab uses is at a high level. Most of the data that the committee used to develop concentration ranges were at the low level. The PT Committee is beginning to look at PT performance and acceptance criteria by preparation method. Also the change in the field of proficiency testing to matrix/technology/analyte may also help laboratories in the future.

EPA/NIST Items

There was no report made on these items.

Membership and Outreach Committee Update

Since the committee's current liaison has resigned, Ms. Burmeister indicated that when appropriate, the Proficiency Testing Committee should appoint a liaison to the Membership and Outreach Committee.

Other Items or Issues

No further items or issues were discussed.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned as the allotted teleconference time expired.

NEXT MEETING

The next Proficiency Testing Committee teleconference is scheduled for March 26, 2002, at 1:00 p.m., EST.

**AGENDA
PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE MEETING
MARCH 12, 2002**

1. Minutes and status of action items from February 26, 2002 teleconference
2. PT Reporting Limits subcommittee report (Marykay)
 - Finalize FOT tables
3. Radiochemistry FOT subcommittee report (John)
4. Acceptance criteria re-evaluation update
 - Status of PT study data received
 - Master plan for evaluation of data
 - Subcommittee report
5. Status of revised “six month” FAQ (RaeAnn)
6. Appendix D Ongoing monitoring criteria subcommittee report (Barb for Ralph)
7. Quick response PT subcommittee report and comment from Jane Jensen, CA ELAP (Anand)
8. Preparation methods – What comes next? (Larry)
9. Comments/questions received
 - Deb Nadeau, Katahdin Analytical Services – Expansion of NYS PT program
 - David Wildasin, American Westech, Inc. – Soil PT concentration ranges for VOCs
10. EPA/NIST items
11. Membership and Outreach Committee update
12. Other items or issues

**ACTION ITEMS
PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE MEETING
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Item No.	Action	Date to be Completed
1.	Develop Technology Codes (McAninch)	03/26/02
2.	Respond to analyte and method code comment (Obenauf)	03/26/02
3.	Costs of PT Samples per technology (Obenauf)	03/26/02
4.	Propose new language for QC standards analysis issue. (Burmeister)	03/26/02
5.	Send revised FOT tables to Ms. Jeanne Hankins for posting to NELAC website (Burmeister)	03/26/02
6.	Revise FAQ document re “no more than seven months” language and distribute to the Proficiency Testing Committee (Steinman)	03/26/02
7.	Schedule a meeting of the Ongoing Oversight of PT Providers subcommittee and report at next teleconference. (Obenauf)	03/26/02
8.	Schedule a meeting of the Quick Response PT Subcommittee and report at next teleconference (Mudambi)	03/26/02

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS
PROFICIENCY TESTING COMMITTEE MEETING
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